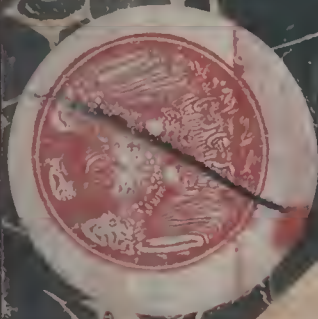


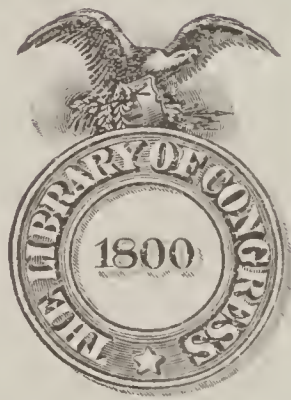
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In Paradise. A farce in one  
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# IN PARADISE

A FARCE

IN ONE ACT

BY

B. B. VALLENTINE

AUTHOR OF

"A SOUTHERN ROMANCE." "FITZNOODLE." "THE LOCK-  
SMITH OF PARIS." "FADETTE." "THE ANGEL,"  
"THE CHAMELEON," "MADAME  
SACCARD." ETC.

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## IN PARADISE.

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*First performed at Keith's Theatre, Union Square, New York,  
January 22, 1900.*

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Monsieur Pontbichot.....Mr. WILSON DEAL  
Monsieur Gresillon.....Mr. C. W. VANCE  
Raphael Delacroix.....Mr. EDWIN BREWSTER  
(*An Artist.*)  
Chico.....Mr. RICHARD MEREDITH  
(*A Lion Tamer.*)  
Rosalie.....Miss SADIE HANDY  
Madame Pontbichot.....Miss MAY NIBLO DREW  
Claire Taupin.....Miss MINNIE SELIGMAN

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## IN PARADISE.

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Scene.—Boudoir of Claire Taupin. Elegantly furnished, portieres, &c. Part of folding bed seen through alcove. Behind the bed, a ladder not in view of the audience R. between bed and the door a fireplace, mantel and mirror. Table in the middle. Couch L. Three doors L., one of which is in the alcove. Door R. first entrance. Chairs behind the table and at R.

At rise:—Rosalie discovered turning over account books on table.

ROSALIE. Well, I must say my mistress for an artist's model, and even for an ex-actress who has been so long on the stage, is very extravagant. (Sighing.) I can't get these accounts straight, and yet she wants me to have them in order, to show her guardian, Monsieur Gresillon, just how she spends the allowance that her uncle left her. Now, I wonder she doesn't tell old Gresillon, who is the executor of the will, that she is engaged to Monsieur Chico. I suppose it is because Monsieur Gresillon might not like Monsieur Chico's profession, and Mademoiselle does not wish to anger old Gresillon or he might stop paying her allowance in advance. (Examining accounts.) And she does want money badly. I really don't know what to say to the landlord and the tradespeople who keep calling to collect bills.

(Ring.)—I wonder who that can be; Mademoiselle cannot be back already.

(Ring heard again.)—Whoever it is, is in a great hurry. (Exit L. U. E.)

(Re-enter ROSALIE with RAPHAEL.)

RAPHAEL. Where is your mistress?

ROSALIE. She is out, but will be back soon. (Aside.) This must be the artist, Monsieur Raphael Delacroix, who lives on the floor above.

RAPHAEL. How very provoking that I can't see her at once. She is an artist's model—is she not?

ROSALIE. Oh, yes. An ex-actress, a singer and several other things beside.

RAPHAEL. (Giving money.) Now, you are a pretty girl

ROSALIE. Thank you, Monsieur.

RAPHAEL. So I'll take you into my confidence and you've got to help me and be quick about it, as I haven't much time. This is the situation—I want your mistress to pretend to have been engaged to be married to me.

ROSALIE. To you?

RAPHAEL. Don't interrupt. An old gentleman from the country will come here by and by. I'm going to marry his daughter, but he won't give his consent until he breaks off personally with my former fiancée. Now, your mistress must be that former fiancée although I never had a former fiancée.

ROSALIE. I never heard of such a thing.

RAPHAEL. Of course you didn't. This old gentleman, Monsieur Pontbichot, unknown to his wife, Madame Pontbichot, wants to see what he believes to be Parisian life, and I will pretend to show it him. Now I must go, and I'll return with the old gentleman immediately. (Giving more money.) Perhaps you'd better say nothing to your mistress. So when I come, just act as if you'd never seen me before.

ROSALIE. Very well. I'll keep my mouth shut.

RAPHAEL. Precisely. Now I'll be off. (Exit RAPHAEL.)

ROSALIE. (Looking after him.) What a joke! I don't see why Mademoiselle shouldn't do it. It will only be like acting a part and I should think he'd pay well for it, and we want money. (She returns to the account books.)

Ring.—That must surely be Mademoiselle. (Exit ROSALIE.)

(Re-enter ROSALIE, followed by CLAIRE, with parcels, etc.)

CLAIRE. I'm tired out. Those dry goods people are perfect brutes. So long as you have money you can have everything in the store, but when you haven't the smallest trifle comes C. O. D. Cash or death. Anybody called, Rosalie?

ROSALIE. Yes, Mademoiselle: the landlord and Monsieur Chico.

CLAIRE. Tell the landlord I'm out—tell him anything you like—and show Monsieur Chico in.

ROSALIE. (Forgetting herself.) And there was—I mean I've been at work on the accounts, and they're not yet ready to show to Monsieur Gresillon.

CLAIRE. (Sitting at table with Rosalie.) Let me see.



ROSALIE. I'll just finish this addition.

CLAIRE. (Looking at book.) Dear me, the expenses were heavy last month.

ROSALIE. Mademoiselle would go to Monte Carlo.

CLAIRE. Yes, I had bad luck. Never mind. I suppose things will come out all right. Have the painters finished in the drawing room?

ROSALIE. Not yet.

CLAIRE. What a nuisance. So I'm obliged to receive in my bedroom. (Looks at accounts again as Chico enters.)

CHICO. Always adding and figuring—if woman is a serpent, you ought to be called an adder.

CLAIRE. Ah, Chico! So glad to see you—why, what's the matter?

CHICO. Nothing.

CLAIRE. There is something. (To ROSALIE.) Rosalie,

ROSALIE. (Rising, and as she goes.) The lion tamer is in a bad temper to-day. When they're married he'll soon find out who's the tamer. (Exit ROSALIE.)

CLAIRE. Now, tell me what it is. (Going to box and showing a jacket and pajamas.) See, here—I remembered it was your birthday. What do you think of this, Chico?

CHICO. Thanks. (Pause.) Well, it's your maid Rosalie who told me I mustn't call whenever your guardian is likely to be here.

CLAIRE. She did quite right. You know my guardian is executor of my uncle's will, and I must keep in his good graces. He must not see you here. He does not know we are engaged to be married, as he would object to you on account of your profession.

CHICO. I object to him from every point of view. He is rich and can give you everything in the way of luxury.

CLAIRE. That's where you make a mistake. He doles me out weekly the income from the investment, my uncle made for me. He is not generous—he is a skinflint. (CHICO rises and flicks with his whip the furniture.) Ah, Chico, come here. (Sitting on couch.) Come here, you great big baby, and I will tell you something which will bring a smile into those melancholy eyes. (CHICO sits by the side of her.) Once there was a lion tamer who tamed ferocious animals at the Neuilly Fair. One stormy day the tawny brutes watched the door of their cage and seemed to ask if he would dare to enter! He entered.

CHICO. (Rising and taking a theatrical pose.) Like this. (Goes to R.)

CLAIRE. (Rising.) Dominated by his fascinating eye, the beasts recoiled. (Chico goes through motions.) At this moment there was a flash of lightning, a peal of thunder—the brutes roared. (CHICO imitates the roaring of a lion.) The public shrieked. (Cry of fright.) Ah! (Changing tone.)

The subdner was on the ground struggling in the grasp of a ferocious panther. (CHICO, going through act of struggling, stops.)

CHICO. No, no it wasn't a panther: you always make a mistake; it was a lion, the lion Jupiter.

CLAIRE. A lion,. Of course, it was a lion; I always forget. I said to myself, "He is lost," but when I saw you rise (CHICO rises) and lash, and lash the lion with your whip, and forcing the monster to crouch before you, vanquished. (CHICO cracking the whip.)

CHICO. (Cracking the whip.) Hoop-la! Jupiter! Hoop-la! (He goes up and round the table crying, "Hoop la!")

CLAIRE. Then you placed your foot on his head (CHICO goes through motion of placing foot on lion's head), and, amid thunders of applause, you bowed to the public. (CHICO bows.) Then I said to myself, That man has my whole heart and can do with me what he pleases—and yet you say that I do not love you!

CHICO. (Coming down stage to R. of her.) Well, I admit that I am jealous of your guardian, Gresillon, but when we're married it will be different, but now I must go and train the lions. I am having a lot of trouble with Jupiter.

CLAIRE. What's the matter with him? Is he ill?

CHICO. No, but he's got spring fever, and has been ugly for about a week. Perhaps one fine day Jupiter may swallow me whole. Then you have him stuffed, and a floral offering placed around his mane with the words:—"To Chico; swallowed, but not forgotten." Goodby! (Exit CHICO.)

CLAIRE. If women were sensible they would never love anybody. But what is one to do if one has a heart?

(Enter ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE. A caller, Mademoiselle.

CLAIRE. Who is it?

ROSALIE. Here's his card.

CLAIRE. (Reading.) Monsieur Raphael Delacroix. Who is he?

ROSALIE. I think it's the artist who lives on the floor above.

CLAIRE. What does he want with me?

ROSALIE. (Aside.) I mustn't say. (Aloud.) He didn't say.

CLAIRE. Show him in. Ask him to wait a little, and then come and help me arrange my hair. (Exit Claire R.)

ROSALIE. What does he want with me? I'm not supposed to know, but as he's an artist, she must surely suppose that he wants her to pose for a model for one of his pictures. (Opening door at back.) This way, monsieur.

RAPHAEL. Well, you didn't say a word?

ROSALIE. Not a word. Mademoiselle will be here immediately. But where's the old gentleman?

RAPHAEL.—Oh, he'll be along; but tell your mistress to make haste.

ROSALIE. All right, monsieur. (Exit Rosalie R.)

RAPHAEL. (Alone.) Well, I must say my future father-in-law is a most energetic individual—a hustler, in fact. After his daughter, Mlle. Jeanne Pontbichot, whom I love, had promised to be my wife, he declined to give his consent unless he was allowed to break off personally with my former attachment. Now, as I haven't any former attachment, I've come here to make him believe that I have. When the coachman opened the door of the cab, and, pushing me in, my future father-in-law, M. Pontbichot, said, "Where does she live?" I was just about to slip out at the opposite door when an idea struck me. I remembered my neighbor in the flat below me was a lively artist's model, as well as an ex-actress, so I had no hesitation in giving my own address. "What? At your own house?" he said. "How very convenient!" Now, it only remained for me to get rid of my future father-in-law for a while. I couldn't present myself and M. Pontbichot to a lady I'd only met on the staircase to ask her to break off friendship with me, a man she didn't know. I then bethought myself of a little present. Hang it all, one can't break off without a parting gift. "Have you any money about you?" "Not a sou," said I. "Neither have I." "Oh, then," said I, "we'll break it off to-morrow." "No! no! To-day! Coachman, drive to the Credit Lyonnais Bank." "Very well," I said; "you go there, and I will go and prepare her for our coming." Then I jumped out of the carriage and told the coachman to drive slowly. I wish she'd come. I'll ring. (Enter Rosalie.)

ROSALIE. What do you wish, monsieur?

RAPHAEL. How long will your mistress be?

ROSALIE. She'll be here in a minute.

RAPHAEL. I wish she'd come.

ROSALIE. (Aside.) He's in a hurry.) Exit Rosalie. (Enter Claire.)

RAPHAEL. (Seeing her and going toward R.) Ah, at last! Now I wonder if she'll have me kicked out.

CLAIRE. You wish to speak with me, monsieur?

RAPHAEL. Yes, madame. Although we do not know each other, I ask you to do me a service—an immense service.

CLAIRE. (Amiable.) Indeed, as a neighbor, if it is in my power. (She sits L. of table.)

RAPHAEL. (Sitting at R.) Madame, in heaven's name, let me be your lover.

CLAIRE. What?

RAPHAEL. Oh, for a quarter of an hour! Make it twenty minutes to be quite sure.

CLAIRE. I wonder where you think you are.

RAPHAEL. (Rises.) But you do not understand.

CLAIRE. Then what do you want?

RAPHAEL. An old gentleman from La Tour, whom you do not know, will be here immediately. He will beg of you not to love me any more.

CLAIRE. Not to love you any more?

RAPHAEL. I beg of you not to interrupt me—every moment is precious.

CLAIRE. (More and more astonished.) Go on, Monsieur, go on!

RAPHAEL. Then you must shed tears. (Assuming the voice of a woman in despair.) "To leave Raphael—so good—so gentle—so loyal! It is so hard to part from him." Then you must swear never to see me again, and then the old gentleman will soothe your feelings by offering you a little present, which he is now drawing from the bank.

CLAIRE. Oh, Monsieur, I think I understand now. You have had the effrontery to claim an acquaintance with me without consulting me.

RAPHAEL. I didn't have time.

CLAIRE. At the risk of compromising me.

RAPHAEL. But nobody will know.

CLAIRE. I think I understand. Monsieur said to himself:—"Claire Taupin is an artist's model, has been an actress and may be treated with contempt, and by giving her a little present ——" Oh! I have no patience! (Giving Raphael his hat, which he had put on the table.) Here, is your hat, Monsieur. You'd better go.

RAPHAEL. What! Then you refuse?

CLAIRE. Certainly, I refuse. (She is about to go.)

RAPHAEL. (Going to her after having put his hat on the table.) But, Mademoiselle, you do not understand. After all, what is it I ask? Merely to let me pass a few minutes here posing as your lover in order to hoodwink an old gentleman who will not give me his daughter unless I have an entanglement which he wants to break off himself.

CLAIRE. (Coming down and passing down to R.) Then why on earth didn't you take him to some one whom you know?

RAPHAEL. (Coming down to L. before the couch.) It was impossible. (Earnestly.) I have no one.

CLAIRE. Then why did you come to me?

RAPHAEL. Why? (Struck with an idea.) Because I was proud to say that I was the lover of the prettiest woman in Paris.

CLAIRE. (Softened.) Oh, indeed, did you say that?



RAPHAEL. Of course, I did. Then my future father-in-law cried, "Why, that's Claire Taupin."

CLAIRE. (Flattered.) No.

RAPHAEL. I assure you. You see, if I have compromised you, your beauty is as much to blame as I.

CLAIRE. (Smiling.) Is it very important to your happiness that I render you this service?

RAPHAEL. It is indeed necessary.

CLAIRE. Then I'll do it. After all, you don't ask me to do anything that is dishonorable. You simply wish me to hoodwink an old gentleman from La Tour. Tell me, is he very shrewd?

RAPHAEL. No; the provincial article.

CLAIRE. Now, let me think for a moment what can we do. I have it! The scene from "Camille" with old Duval! I'll play it!

RAPHAEL. Do you know it?

CLAIRE. Do I know it? Why, it was on account of that scene that I had to leave the conservatory—the other girls were jealous. (Going up and preparing to act.) Old Duval enters and says, "Mademoiselle Marguerite Gautier." (Turning and acting the other part.) "It is I, monsieur. To whom have I the honor of speaking?" "To Monsieur Duval." "To Ah!"

Monsieur Duval? Ah!"

CLAIRE. Yes. (Acting.) "Ah, monsieur, cease, I beg of you. You ask me to do something that is too terrible."

RAPHAEL. Superb.

CLAIRE. And yet the critics said that I acted without feeling.

RAPHAEL. Nonsense. If I had been there, you would have received a curtain call.

CLAIRE. And now you must put on this dressing jacket. (Gets jacket) and I'll address you familiarly, so that you will feel perfectly at home—and now ring. (Raphael rings.)

(Enter Rosalie.)

CLAIRE. Here, Rosalie, take these things away. (Gives her Raphael's hat and coat.)

RAPHAEL. (Looking at jacket.) That is more than I bargained for. Pontbichot can't refuse me his daughter after this.

CLAIRE. We're going to play a trick on an old gentleman from the country, and pretend to have been engaged to each other; he'll be here immediately.

ROSALIE. Very well, Mademoiselle. (Aside.) Well, he wasn't long striking up an acquaintance. (Exit Rosalie.)

RAPHAEL. Now, what will he say? He'll be here soon.

CLAIRE. The jacket fits you like a glove, doesn't it?

CLAIRE. Just think how funny it is that we are going

IN PARADISE.

to break off with each other when there never was an attachment, and I have never seen you before.

RAPHAEL. It is ridiculous when you come to think of it. (Bell rings.) There's a ring—it must be he.

CLAIRE. (Pointing to sofa.) Go and sit there. (Raphael sits.)

ROSALIE. (Entering.) Madame, it's the old gentleman from La Tour.

CLAIRE. Show him in. (She sits close to Raphael.)

ROSALIE. Here?

CLAIRE. Certainly.

RAPHAEL. (Aside.) Oh, my fiancée, it is all for you.

ROSALIE. (Showing in PONTBICHOT.) This way, Monsieur.

(PONTBICHOT enters, hair frizzed, flower in buttonhole.)

PONTBICHOT. At last I am here, in Paradise.

(Exit ROSALIE, taking Pontbichot's hat.) (Pontbichot sees Claire and Raphael. He waits for a moment, and, seeing they do not speak, he decides to speak.)

PONTBICHOT. (Behind the table.) Mademoiselle Claire Taupin —.

CLAIRE. (Rising.) It is I, Monsieur. (RAPHAEL rises and goes to L.)

PONTBICHOT. By Jove, she is pretty!

CLAIRE. To whom have I the honor of speaking?

PONTBICHOT. To the future father-in-law of Monsieur Delacroix.

CLAIRE. (Uttering a cry, falls tragically on the couch.) Future father-in-law! Ah!

PONTBICHOT. (Frightened, throws himself to the right of the couch.) Great heavens! She's fainted!

RAPHAEL. (Quietly, going to left of couch.) Oh, it is nothing, merely emotion.

PONTBICHOT. Go away, leave me alone with her.

RAPHAEL. What for?

PONTBICHOT. Yes, I'll call you.

RAPHAEL. Promise me that you'll treat her gently. It is so hard for her to give up a man like me.

PONTBICHOT. I promise you. (He goes behind the table and inspects the apartment.)

RAPHAEL. (Entering room R.) If this is what a young man must do in order to win the hand of a girl, half the world would be bachelors.

PONTBICHOT. (Examining furniture.) So this is the boudoir of a soubrette; what luxury! (Sniffing.) What perfume—I wonder what my wife would say.

CLAIRE. (Aside, seeing that PONTBICHOT has not addressed a word to her.) He seems to have forgotten me. (Aloud.) Hum! Hum!



PONTBICHOT. She is reviving. (With admiration.) She looks even prettier than when I first came in.

CLAIRE. (As if reviving.) Where am I? (Acting with fear.) Oh, 'tis you!

PONTBICHOT. Me?

CLAIRE. You? (Aside.) Now for Camille!

(PONTBICHOT C.)

CLAIRE. (Tragically.) Ah, Monsieur, cease, I beg of you; you ask me to do something that is too dreadful, more terrible than I could have imagined. You should not do so; we were so happy.

PONTBICHOT. (Aside.) She expresses herself beautifully. (Aloud.) But the parting would have to come.

CLAIRE. Ah, Monsieur, you do not know how we love one another. You ask me to leave Armand!

PONTBICHOT. Armand?

CLAIRE. (Aside.) I meant Raphael. I suffer, and when one suffers it is difficult to choose names—oh, how I suffer!

PONTBICHOT. (Aside, moved.) She looks splendid when she suffers. (Taking her hand.) Listen.

CLAIRE. Ah! You can take my hand and feel my pulse.

PONTBICHOT. That's what I am doing. It is slow.

CLAIRE. You mean that it is very fast. (Drawing her hand away.) I have a fever.

PONTBICHOT. (Aside.) How women, when they love, do love.

CLAIRE. (Letting herself fall to the right in despair.) Ah, Raphael! Ah, Raphael.

RAPHAEL. (Looking in at door.) Here I am: is it broken off?

PONTBICHOT. No, no! Not yet.

RAPHAEL. I heard my name.

PONTBICHOT. It was she in despair. (Pushing him toward L.) Go away.

RAPHAEL. But ——.

PONTBICHOT. (Pushing him.) Go away. (Closing the door.)

CLAIRE. Ah! Miserable woman, you believed yourself happy; happiness is not for me.

PONTBICHOT. (Trying to calm her.) Calm yourself.

CLAIRE. Ah! Monsieur, do you know what misery is?

PONTBICHOT. I have been married thirty years.

CLAIRE. What will be my life henceforth?

PONTBICHOT. Come, now, one so charming as you.

CLAIRE. (Rising and passing to L.) Do not torture me, Raphael, so good, so gentle, so loyal!

PONTBICHOT. (Aside, reaching R.) This is dreadful: I can't stand it.

CLAIRE. I shall die.

PONTBICHOT. (Going to her.) Oh!

CLAIRE. I feel it here. (She strikes her breast.)

PONTBICHOT. (Unnerved.) Don't say things like that.

CLAIRE. But I do.

PONTBICHOT. (Affected.) No, but ——

CLAIRE. (Again striking herself.) And then I feel it there. (She coughs.)

PONTBICHOT. (Aside.) Perhaps if I offered her the little present it might calm her. (He takes out his pocket-book.)

CLAIRE. (Who has seen him.) Man, what are you doing?

PONTBICHOT. (Taking out banknotes.) But——

CLAIRE. (Indignant, passing to R.) Money! You rend my heart and attempt to heal it with money. You will kill me.

PONTBICHOT. (Not knowing what to do with the money.) I beg your pardon. I will not kill you. (Going to put money in his pocket.)

CLAIRE. (Pointing to table.) No, put it there! (With nobility.) Ah! Monsieur, that which you do is indeed infamous.

PONTBICHOT. (About to pick up the notes.) But, then——

CLAIRE. (Quickly.) Don't touch them. (Taking tongs from fireplace.) Those banknotes shall not soil my fingers. (She picks up the notes with the tongs and holds them out.) What shame! Great Heavens! My mother! The rent! The rent! (She rings.)

PONTBICHOT. (More and more affected, draws out his handkerchief.) She is thinking of her mother.

(Enter ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE. (Aside.) Well, this is interesting.

CLAIRE. (To ROSALIE, handing her the banknotes at the end of the tongs.) Take these, Rosalie, and give them to the poor. (Aside.) I'm the poor.

ROSALIE. (Astonished, taking the tongs with the notes.) Ha! Ha!

PONTBICHOT. She gives them to the poor. It is sublime.

(Exit ROSALIE, laughing, with tongs.)

CLAIRE. (Aside.) And now for the final resignation and it is done. (Aloud.) Ah! As they have told you that I have a heart and that I am good, it is Raphael who has reformed me.

PONTBICHOT. (Affected.) Raphael, Raphael.

CLAIRE. Raphael, yes. You ask me to separate from him for his future, for his happiness. Command me, I'm ready.

PONTBICHOT. (Sobbing.) Ah! Great Heaven!

CLAIRE. I didn't mean to affect him like this.

PONTBICHOT. Oh, Heaven! Heaven!

CLAIRE. (Triumphant, to audience.) Tears, and the critics said I acted without feeling.

PONTBICHOT. (Calling.) Raphael! Raphael!

RAPHAEL. (Entering.) Well, is it broken off?

PONTBICHOT. (Eyes filled with tears.) Broken off? No. Raphael, throw yourself in her arms. You can't leave that woman.

RAPHAEL. What's that he says?

PONTBICHOT. You cannot do it.

RAPHAEL. (To PONT.) 'How is this, you come here to break it off, and instead of doing so you——

PONTBICHOT. She loves you as Juliet loved Romeo.

RAPHAEL. I beg of you to get me out of this.

CLAIRE. (Low.) Be reassured. (Aloud, with feeling.) We must now say our last adieux.

PONTBICHOT. No!

RAPHAEL. Yes!

PONTBICHOT. No! No!

CLAIRE. It must be, because I wish it.

RAPHAEL. Yes, it must be, because she wishes it. Ah! You do not know what a will she has when she wishes something.

RAPHAEL. It is hard for her to give up a man like me, but it must be.

CLAIRE. (To RAPHAEL.) Adieu!

RAPHAEL. Adieu! Adieu! (To PONT.) 'Come along, let us go, it's broken off! (Wants to take him away.)

PONTBICHOT. If you leave her you are a scoundrel.

RAPHAEL. Come along.

PONTBICHOT. Give her at least one last good bye kiss.

RAPHAEL. One good bye kiss, yes.

(While they are embracing, GRESILLON appears.)

GRESILLON. What is this? My old friend Pontbichot!

CLAIRE. (Turning round.) My guardian, Monsieur Gresillon.

PONTBICHOT and RAPHAEL. Gresillon? Our old friend Gresillon.

GRESILLON. Raphael kissing my ward, Claire Taupin, and in your presence.

(PONT. L. GRESILLON, RAPHAEL, CLAIRE.)

CLAIRE. (Aside.) They know each other.

PONTBICHOT. It was the breaking off kiss.

(Hides his face on GRESILLON'S shoulder.)

GRESILLON. Raphael, your lover!

CLAIRE. (Passing between RAPHAEL and GRESILLON.) Not at all. Now, this is becoming serious; enough of acting. Why, I never saw the gentleman until an hour

ago. He came here to ask me to pretend to be his former fiancée, in order to hoodwink that old gentleman. Is it not true?

RAPHAEL. It is quite true.

GRESILLON. And do you expect me to digest that story?

PONTBICHOT. (To himself.) Then what the devil did he bring me here for?

CLAIRE. (To GRESILLON.) Then you don't believe me?

GRESILLON. But, I saw Madame. I saw——

CLAIRE. I don't care what you saw. I tell you the truth, and you doubt me.

(She goes up.)

GRESILLON. (Following her.) But——

CLAIRE. Don't bother me!

(Exit CLAIRE.)

GRESILLON. You hear what she says.

RAPHAEL. My dear Gresillon——

GRESILLON. Don't dear me! You, Raphael, you whom I regarded as my most intimate friend, coming behind my back and making love to my ward, without consulting me!

RAPHAEL. I tell you I never saw the lady.

GRESILLON. Then, why do I find you here with that smoking jacket on?

RAPHAEL. Simply to make it appear that I was quite at home here, to deceive Monsieur Pontbichot.

GRESILLON. What do you take me for?

RAPHAEL. Monsieur Pontbichot insisted that I had a former fiancée, and exacted as a condition of consent to my marriage with his daughter that he should break off personally my former attachment. So I induced this lady, Mademoiselle Claire Taupin, to play the part.

PONTBICHOT. (Going to RAPHAEL.) Raphael, swear to me that you do not love Claire Taupin.

RAPHAEL. I swear it!

PONTBICHOT. Then this is where I come in.

GRESILLON. (To RAPHAEL.) Nothing now remains but for me to go home.

PONTBICHOT. Yes, go home! Go home!

(He reaches R.)

RAPHAEL. But——

GRESILLON. (Severely.) Go home!

RAPHAEL. Very well, that's what I will do.

(Exit RAPHAEL.)

GRESILLON. A fine husband he would have made for your daughter; he would have deceived his wife. Well, now I have done with that young man.

PONTBICHOT. Then you go home?



GRESILLON. Yes, I'm going, and you may tell my ward, Mademoiselle Claire Taupin——

PONTBICHOT. Yes, of course. That's understood. Go home.

GRESILLON. Give her these before I go. (Taking bank notes from pocket and coming down.) Take them. Tell her it is a parting gift from me.

PONTBICHOT. (Pushing him.) Very well. Now you'd better go.

GRESILLON. (Coming down.) I really don't want to go. Don't let me go.

PONTBICHOT. Oh, you make me weary! You're not a man, you're a weathercock!

GRESILLON. (Going, but turning round and seeing CLAIRE.) Claire, I did not expect this of you.

CLAIRE. You still doubt me? Go away, guardian.

GRESILLON. Claire,

(Coming towards her.)

PONTBICHOT. (Going to GRESILLON.) You'd better go, or I'll tell your wife.

GRESILLON. My wife!

(Exit GRESILLON.)

CLAIRE. This will teach me not to render services to strangers in the future, and thus have a serious quarrel with my guardian.

PONTBICHOT. (To himself.) Pontbichot, the hour of freedom has arrived. This is glorious! Go it, Pontbichot. What would my wife say if she saw me here in an actress' boudoir?

CLAIRE. (Aside.) He walks up and down like one of Chico's lions. An idea! If I could only get this old gentleman to rent this apartment, to keep an eye on his son-in-law in the apartment above, I could re-establish my credit with tradespeople.

PONTBICHOT. (Much embarrassed.) Madame—— Mademoiselle, what the deuce does a fellow say the first time he speaks to a soubrette?

CLAIRE. Did you speak.

PONTBICHOT. You see before you a man——a man——hang it! I don't know how to begin. For thirty years I have looked forward to such a meeting as this, and now that these anticipations are realized I can't utter a word. I feel like a fool.

CLAIRE. You are bashful.

PONTBICHOT. Yes—— me——

CLAIRE. Then this story of breaking it off was merely an excuse for making my acquaintance?

PONTBICHOT. (Sheepish.) I may say yes.

CLAIRE. (Rising.) Then, Monsieur, I don't think I

ought to listen to you any longer.

PONTBICHOT. But you really must.

CLAIRE. (Aside.) If I could only get the old fool to rent the apartment. I'll try, at any rate.

PONTBICHOT. Mademoiselle Claire Tanpin.

CLAIRE. (In a sweet voice.) My friend.

PONTBICHOT. (Joyfully.) Her friend! She calls me her friend!

CLAIRE. Come and sit here, near me.

PONTBICHOT. On the couch?

CLAIRE. Now, I am going to read you a lecture. (PONTBICHOT takes her hand.) No, no; you must be good.

PONTBICHOT. Ah, do not draw away that naughty little hand, that little hand at the end of which is an arm on which is a neck where sits the head of a goddess.

CLAIRE. No, you mustn't do that.

PONTBICHOT. Claire Tanpin——

CLAIRE. And I don't like you to stare at me like that.

PONTBICHOT. Clairette, oh! Clairette!

CLAIRE. (Dropping her eyes.) Oh!

PONTBICHOT. I can't express half what I think about you. You are charming, adorable, Claire; I believe that I love you.

CLAIRE. (Simulating fear.) You really must go.

PONTBICHOT. Go, when I am having a glimpse of Paradise?

CLAIRE. I'm afraid you're a great flirt and have made many conquests. You are a perfect Don Juan.

PONTBICHOT. (Enthusiastic.) She says I'm a Don Juan. Oh, Claire. (He snatches a kiss, his arm around her waist.)

CLAIRE. (In a tender tone.) Now swear—swear that you'll marry me.

PONTBICHOT. But I'm already married.

CLAIRE. Married! Married! Indeed! First Monsieur Raphael Delacroix comes here and compromises me with my guardian, and then you appear and lead me to believe you are about to make me an offer of marriage, and then tell me you have a wife. You are a nice pair. (Pontbichot uneasy.) But you are far the worse of the two. As for that future son-in-law of yours, the noise that goes on up in his apartments is simply dreadful. I've had the ceiling repaired twice since I have been here. He has driven away all my clients. There's a procession on that staircase all night, and the saturnalia orgies that go on up there are awful. I won't stay in this apartment another day, not another hour, not another minute, even if I have three months' rent to pay.

PONTBICHOT. You shall not be a loser, Mademoiselle.



If my future son-in-law indulges in orgies, and as you are going to leave I will rent these apartments, and keep an eye on him. You shall not be one franc out of pocket.

CLAIRE. You really will! I'm so much obliged to you. It is such a relief. I'll ring for Rosalie, who is my maid and secretary. (Rings.)

(Enter ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE. What now, I wonder?

CLAIRE. Rosalie, this gentleman has taken these apartments for three months; see that the lease is at once transferred to him (low to Rosalie) and make him pay all we owe.

ROSALIE. (Low.) Never fear, madam.

CLAIRE. (Going.) Adieu, Monsieur. I trust you will be happier here than I have been.

(Exit CLAIRE.)

PONTBICHOT. Adieu, Mademoiselle.

ROSALIE. (At table.) The rent, Monsieur, will be five hundred—I mean five thousand francs a month.

PONTBICHOT. Wasn't that rather a hasty shift? Five thousand — (Aside.) The devil. (Looking in pocketbook, which is empty.) I gave her all the money I had. Five thousand, let me see. Ah! Gresillon's breaking off gift. It came in handy. Five thousand, I think you said. There is the exact amount. (Handing notes to Rosalie.)

ROSALIE. What name, Monsieur?

PONTBICHOT. Bibi, Bibi, with an accent on the first B.

ROSALIE. (Writing receipt.) Received from Monsieur Bibi, five thousand francs. Here is the receipt.

PONTBICHOT. I don't want a receipt; you can keep the evidence.

ROSALIE. I will see that the lease is at once transferred and made out in your name, Monsieur. I have the honor —  
(Bowing, exit Rosalie.)

PONTBICHOT. Well, she has the honor, and I have the flat. Well, here I am in Paradise. This is Paris life. I'm in the boudoir of an actress. Ah! there is one of those wardrobes I've heard Gresillon speak about. He said he'd hidden in them so often—— (Opening door on R.) The bathroom—very luxurions. I don't see why I shouldn't take a bath. I've leased the apartment. Yes, I'll plunge.

(Exit into bathroom.)

GRESILLON. (Entering cautiously.) Cuckoo. She isn't here. I dare say she's gone out with Pontbichot to talk it over. It was wrong of me to quarrel with her. She has a perfect right to do as she pleases, but as I have been her guardian and a kind of father to her for so many years, I don't wish her to receive visitors without consulting me. And poor old Pontbichot, he'd like to dive into the giddy

whirl of Parisian dissipation, but he doesn't know how. Oh, I'm so tired. (Closes his eyes.)

PONTBICHOT. (Entering from bathroom in pajamas.) I thought I heard voices.

GRESILLON. Well, I'm damned.

PONTBICHOT. What, you back again?

GRESILLON. What are you doing here?

PONTBICHOT. Didn't you tell me to break it off?

GRESILLON. Yes, but not in that costume.

RAPHAEL. (Entering quickly.) I forgot my coat.

GRESILLON. Raphael!

RAPHAEL. Gresillon! (He comes down between PONTBICHOT and GRESILLON.)

PONTBICHOT. My son-in-law!

RAPHAEL. My father-in-law-that-is-to-be, in pajamas. What are you doing in that costume?

PONTBICHOT. I was breaking it off for Gresillon.

GRESILLON. Nothing of the sort. He wants to flirt with Claire Taupin.

RAPHAEL. I object to this, father-in-law.

PONTBICHOT. (Authoritatively.) Is it as my future son-in-law that you make these observations?

RAPHAEL. Certainly.

PONTBICHOT. Generally a son-in-law is content in worrying his mother-in-law, and you propose to make the experiment on your father-in-law.

RAPHAEL. Well?

PONTBICHOT. I'll take back my daughter.

RAPHAEL. And do you imagine for a moment I will give her up?

GRESILLON. Never!

RAPHAEL. You want to remain and make love to Gresillon's ward?

PONTBICHOT. No. I'm going to stay here to keep an eye on you.

RAPHAEL. If you stay, I'll stay here.

GRESILLON. Me, too.

PONTBICHOT. Leave this room! I will not be insulted in my own house!

GRESILLON. What's that?

PONTBICHOT. I tell you I have leased these apartments.

RAPHAEL. You are in pajamas. I'll be in pajamas. (Puts on overalls or pajamas.)

GRESILLON. (Puts on pajamas.) Me, too.

RAPHAEL. All that you say to Claire Taupin, I'll say.

GRESILLON. Me, too.

RAPHAEL. All that you do, I'll do, and what is more, I'll tell your wife.

PONTBICHOT. (Going toward bed.) I defy you. (He jumps on the bed.)

GRESSILLON and RAPHAEL. (Regarding PONTBICHOT for a moment.) We'll go, too. (Both jump in the folding bed.)

CLAIRE. (Entering and going to table, turning round and suddenly seeing them.) Great Heavens! What's all this?

(GRESILLON, RAPHAEL and PONTBICHOT all come down together and begin to speak at once.)

PONTBICHOT. Tell them they have no right to be here.

CLAIRE. (Trying not to laugh.) But, gentlemen, what are you doing here?

RAPHAEL. Waiting for you.

CLAIRE. In that costume?

ROSALIE. (Entering, quickly shrieks on seeing the three men.) Madame!

CLAIRE. What now?

ROSALIE. There's a lady wants to speak to you—Madam Pontbichot.

(Exit ROSALIE.)

PONTBICHOT. (Crying out.) My wife!

RAPHAEL. My mother-in-law!

(General scampering of the men to hide—GRESILLON in wardrobe, RAPHAEL behind bed, PONTBICHOT in bed. Enter ROSALIE, showing in MADAM PONTBICHOT, who has a handbag.)

CLAIRE. (To ROSALIE, pointing to coats and hats on sofa.) Take those things away.

(Exit ROSALIE with them.)

RAPHAEL. (Putting out his head.) I wonder what she's come here for?

MME. PONTBICHOT. (To CLAIRE.) Excuse me, Madam, but I come to get some information about a young man who lives on the floor above.

CLAIRE. Monsieur Raphael Delacroix. Yes, I know him.

MME. PONTBICHOT. He wants to marry my daughter. Has he any entanglements?

CLAIRE. Not one.

RAPHAEL. (Aside.) Noble Claire.

CLAIRE. (Furious.) Ten, twenty, thirty —

MME. PONTBICHOT. Horrible.

CLAIRE. There's a regular procession on that staircase. That apartment is an asylum, and at night —

MME. PONTBICHOT. And they come also at night!

(Enter CHICO with hats.)

CHICO. To whom do these hats belong? (Madame Pontbichot runs off.)

RAPHAEL. (Aside.) The devil!

CHICO. I'll find them; where are they? (About to enter door.)

CLAIRE. I forbid you to enter.

CHICO. Let me pass, they're there. (Pushes CLAIRE aside and enters room.)

CLAIRE. It's the lion tamer—he'll ——. (RAPHAEL, GRESILLON and PONTBICHOT appear again.)

(Enter MME. PONTBICHOT.)

MME. PONTBICHOT. I forgot my bag. (RAPHAEL passes behind the bed, PONTBICHOT tries to climb up it and GRESILLON under it, crash outside. CHICO breaks through the door.)

CHICO. (Entering, whip in hand.) They're not there. (MADAME PONTBICHOT runs off.)

(Folding bed closes with noise, imprisoning RAPHAEL and GRESILLON. PONTBICHOT comes forward. CHICO rushes to him and drags him down to front.)

CHICO. Who are you, and what are you doing there?

PONTBICHOT. I am —

ROSALIE. Why, he's one of the men who's painting the ceiling, can't you see that; look at his overalls?

CLAIRE. Of course, and there's the ladder.

CHICO. Why, so it is! I'm sorry I made all this fuss. (PONTBICHOT goes up stage.)

CLAIRE. My poor, bad tempered Chico. I shall have to turn tamer and tame you.

CHICO. Well, Claire, when we're married you'll find an improvement in my temper, because I shall have no reason to be jealous.

CLAIRE. That, indeed, will be "Paradise."

(CURTAIN.)

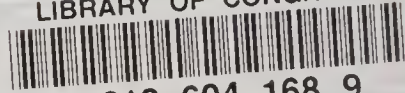








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